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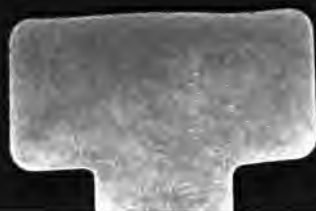
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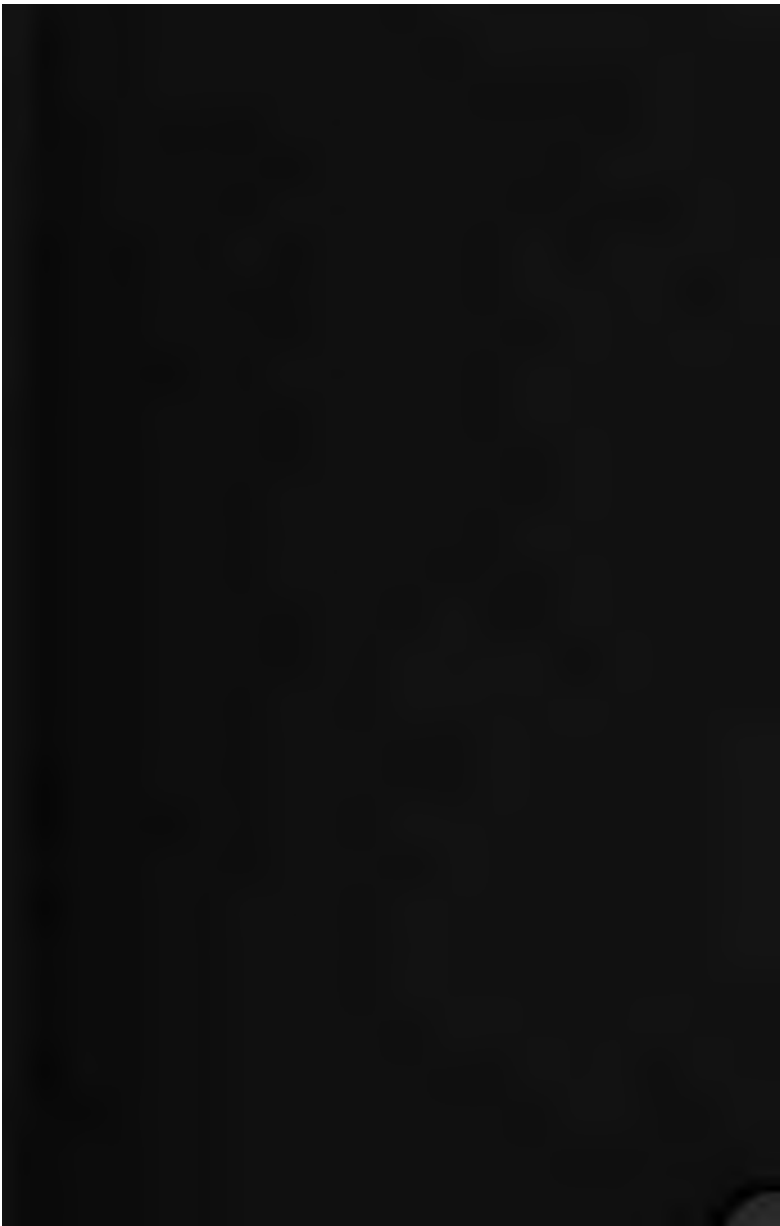
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A BASKET
OF
FRAGMENTS



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A BASKET OF FRAGMENTS.

BY

A QUONDAM AUTHOR.

"Gather up the fragments that remain, that nothing be lost."

JOHN vi. 12.



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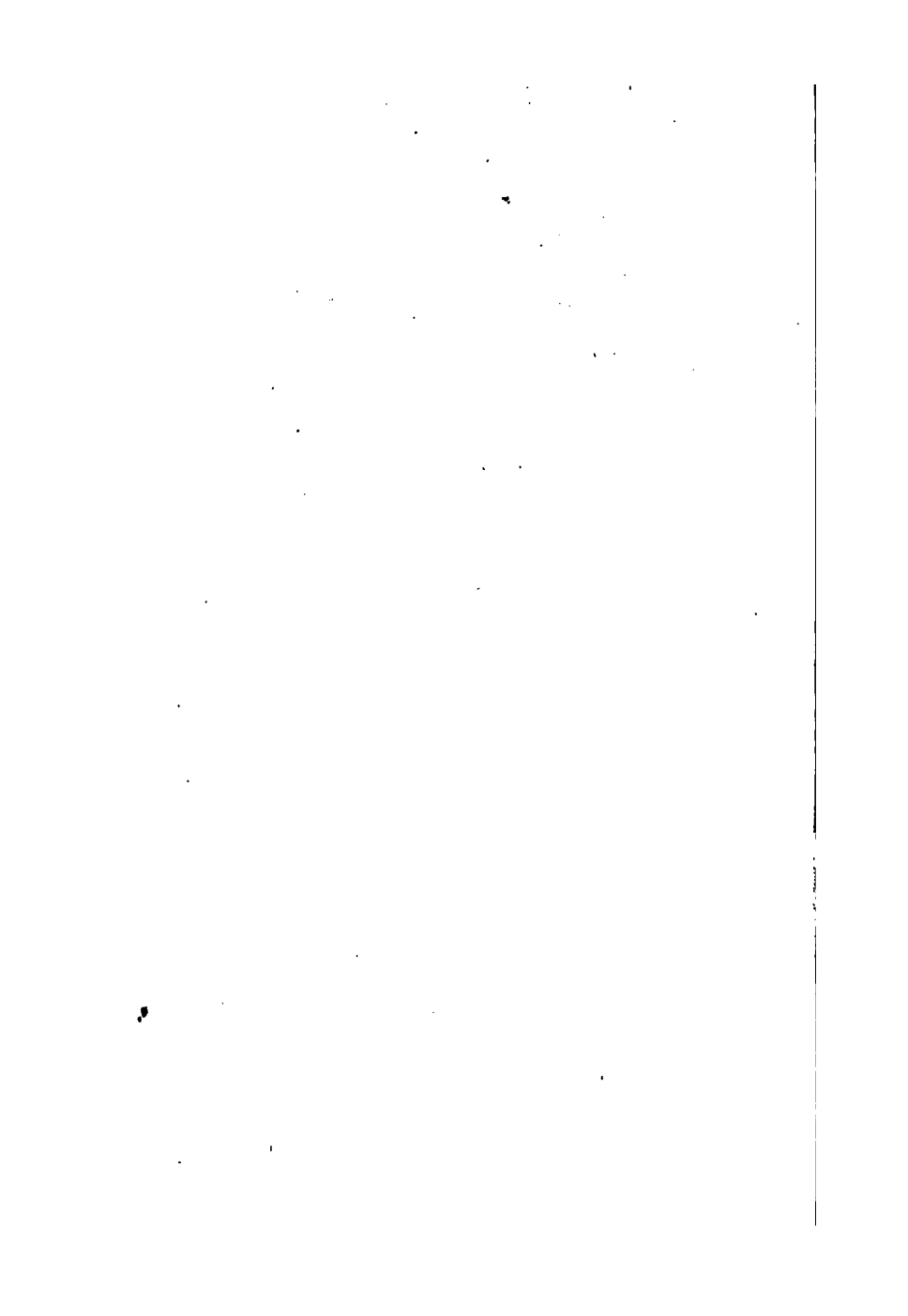


PREFACE.



THE accompanying pages are the original thoughts of the author, and whatever resemblance, either in idea or language, may possibly be traced to the published opinions or writings of any other author, either known or anonymous, not a thought or line which follows is a plagiarism.

January 1864.



A BASKET OF FRAGMENTS.

THE principal consideration in the estimation of the value of Time, is how much of it remains for the accomplishment of the main purpose of existence. This, if rightly considered, will lead us to clear the decks for action. Very laudable pursuits in themselves may be very ill-timed; for instance, how absurd it would be for a naval commander, in the presence of an enemy, with a decisive victory in his power, to be employed in the study of the theory of naval warfare.

It should be matter of serious reflection to all,

that few die after a slow and lingering illness, but most by a short and sharp attack of disease; and in both events, it generally happens that the immediate prospect of death is only a few hours, or, at most, days, before actual dissolution. People pass from active life, or retired, unsuspecting leisure, in a very short time into the arms of death, and no one probably is so much surprised, nay, thunderstruck, as themselves, to find the dread period has at last arrived. We hear of one and another being carried away without reflecting that it might, from all appearances, just as likely have been ourselves—perhaps much more likely. “Be ye also ready, for in an hour that ye think not, the Son of man cometh.”

Spring is the time for blossoms and flowers, autumn for fruits. It is just so with the human mind. In youth, we are demonstrative, and we judge our own writings and actions, as well

as those of others, by their efflorescence. Our life consists, then, mainly in giving and receiving impressions. We are in the subjective condition, and treat everything (and this is particularly observable in young poets) subjectively. As we get older, we become careless of appearances, and look for results; we go by a more direct road to every purpose; we become more real—more objective—the ideal merges in its highest fruit, which is the real. We make, however, a great mistake if we overlook the fact that the more profuse the bloom, the greater the promise of the vintage. A young writer will generally discourse on the abstract virtues, and paint them in all their brilliant colour, as beautiful abstractions: the old and experienced writer will show one or all these virtues in action in some person or persons, with a thread of facts and circumstances to connect them together. The young writer sighs for perfection, and is often harsh in his

judgments; the old one rejoices in good wherever he finds it; seeks to extract it out of apparent evil, and is more charitable and forgiving. Here, again, it must never be forgotten that the higher the ideal and practice of virtue when young, the greater the capacity for the extraction and appreciation of all excellence when old. When true, the most fiery and impassioned youth will settle down to the most venerable, loving, and tolerant old man.

An excrescent democracy both pious and impious has been found to end in military despotism. The one amongst ourselves, under the Puritans and Cromwell; the other in France, under the worshippers of reason and Napoleon. It remains to be seen whether an indigenous democracy in America will not lead to the same result.

Have you never observed how a powerful

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company embodies its independence in every petty official in its employ? They act each in his department as though they were the company itself, and backed by all its authority; they are almost as little respecters of persons as the law itself.

There are many apocryphal and untrue incidents related of great persons so characteristic and well contrived, that one feels a pleasure in relating them, whether true or not: they are a sort of literary property, in which a copyright should exist, as in novels: if they are not true, they ought to be.

Little events and little things are like the rudders of ships,—they decide the direction of great events.

Far too little attention is given to the moral effect of public criticisms of works in literature

and art ; to laud a bad work is a great moral wrong, for not only does it tend to lower the public taste, but it does a positive injury to authors and artists of a higher class. This is the case when the criticism is the sincere opinion of the writer ; but when it is either bought, or induced from motives of a secondary character, it is no better than a robbery. The license with which the press deals with literary property and reputation, has often inflicted an irreparable injury on a most deserving man, and made those who would have been the best citizens disaffected.

Have we any conception of the grandeur of the sights to be witnessed at the advent of the Lord Jesus Christ to judge the world ! I think not. If the eruption of a single burning mountain be a grand object, what must a burning world be ! and yet a burning world would be infinitely less awful, or indeed real, than the

doom of a single human soul. Our ideas of celestial glory seem to be fainter still, because we are more familiar with misery than bliss ; as though this were one of the curses of the Fall ! How feeble is our highest artistic conception of this glory, represented as it is by a few rays shining round the head, a nimbus ; and yet, feeble as this is, if one solitary being in our world had such a visible crown, the whole world would go to see ! These very eyes of ours, which now look with so much interest on a bit of gold, shall see sights such as “ it has not entered into the heart of man to conceive.” “ In my flesh I shall see God ; I shall see Him for myself, and not another.”

Perhaps one of the most insidious and fatal errors in the world is the unthinking, unreflecting way in which men do their neighbours wrong ; not maliciously, but for the sake of their own advancement. This is more especially dan-

gerous when the characters of men are at stake. Man's property is pretty well guarded against depredation; but a man's character, and especially that man's character who has so laid himself open to attack, as to give others what may be called a sporting certificate, is very much at the mercy of his fellows. This danger is peculiarly the danger of professions; where men are so much tempted to elevate themselves by detracting from the professional reputation of their brethren; and, as affects morals, the legal profession is, most of all, exposed to the evil, because it has most to do with the practical follies and wickedness of men. If any man of law endeavours to aggravate, or even wantonly expose, the evil character or conduct of his fellow man, or pursues him with too unsparing severity, whose secret, though even *unconscious* motive, it may be, to earn for himself a character for ability, learning, or sagacity, such a man is on a road fatal at least to nobility, or any

moral eminence, either in this world or the next. "Be ye merciful as your Father also is merciful."

I do not think there is a greater stumbling-block in the way of truth and the spread of vital religion than the conventionalities of life. It is an indisputable fact, that the truth, even in love, is not spoken in either the church or the world ; but in comparison of the vast importance of eternal interests, infinitely less in the church than in the world. There is far more of sincere truth-speaking in political than in religious matters. There is a common union and consent, amounting to combination, that the truth shall not be spoken : the civilities and amenities of life are placed above the truth, and any layman or minister who dare to speak the truth would be banned, and placed out of the pale of social intercourse. Any man who should take upon himself to do it would expose himself to similar

persecutions and indignities which have befallen the prophetic character. I feel certain that the world will never be materially better until the chains of conventionalism and sham are snapped asunder.

Every house, where there are children, is a manufactory. The product is the character of the children who, when arrived at maturity, are sent into the world's market, and every word and action in the house constitutes the process of manufacture. A good state is to be measured, not by the wealth of the few, but by the good qualities of the many. It is a sad mistake when the State sacrifices the home influences which are to produce the good and valuable citizen to the accumulation of national wealth and the extension of trade and commerce. Lancashire is employed, for the most part, in turning out very good cotton goods, and very bad children; and this is the sure road to the ruin of a State. This

is the true philosophy of the employment of married women in factories.

When I was a young man I was far more active, in concert with young men like myself, in the promotion and origination of means of improving the condition of my fellow men ; but possessed of the poetic sensibilities, I soon found, when I came to deal with adult men, that my susceptibilities were far more wounded by contact with their coldness and selfishness, and I shrank into myself. I have learnt that selfishness in man crushes nearly all the best enterprises. It is the grand bane of man, and stands most effectually in its own light.

What is the difference between personal and general preaching ? In one sense, if a preacher denounces any sin of which any one of his hearers is guilty, he is personal. How is it, then, that people, guilty of such sins, can sit so calmly

under a preacher who is constantly denouncing them? The answer is, because sin is generally secret or unacknowledged, and if a preacher confine himself to denouncing any sin in the abstract, he is a general preacher, and is safe from opposition and persecution. If any preacher, however, push the practical application of the principles which condemn secret sins to such a degree as to call down observation upon persons, or if he expose some practical and notorious inconsistency or offence, of which one of his hearers is known to be guilty, he will go into a hornet's nest. This is really the *only* faithful preaching.

I confess to very serious misgivings as to the character of the next generation, when I look around me, and see the character of the young men and women who must certainly form that generation.

What a singular thing it would be considered

if a father should mention with satisfaction to his friends the death of his infant child, and yet if, after every means used to save the child's life, God should see fit to take it away, I am not sure that the father would not have substantial cause to rejoice that his child had escaped the imminent dangers which beset the souls of men ; certainly avoided a miserable eternity ; and certainly been numbered amongst the blessed for ever.

When the string of broad buffoonery is played upon, as it often is, upon the platform at religious meetings, the response it meets with from the congregation reveals the wickedness which lurks in long and sanctimonious countenances. Men who deal very largely in this commodity, and have a natural gift for dealing in it well, are generally prime favourites of a so-called religious audience, who flock to hear Momus on the platform, whilst they would think it shocking to go

to see him, where it would be far less out of place, namely on the stage. How often have I seen men of large endowments and beautiful character put completely in the shade by the performance of a religious mountebank !

I have long observed, with sorrow, that it is often more dangerous in matters of business to deal with men who make great professions of religion, than it is to do so with honourable men of the world.

The Saviour is always nearest to the good man in the hour of his death and extremity ; then when the world sees nothing but an object of pity and contempt, the angels and glorified spirits see an object of envy, if envy could dwell in such breasts : they see the suffering saint in the arms of the Lord Jesus Christ. Such a man, though in the utmost earthly misery, is incalculably more blessed than if he possessed

the world, and all its inhabitants were at his feet. The eye of faith sees it in this world; the eye of sense laughs it to scorn; but, beyond this world there is but one eye, both to the lost and saved, and that sees only dread or blessed reality.

It is a great mistake to suppose that there is anything *undeserved* in persecution or punishment for dishonor done to truth or religion. It cannot be so; the most awful punishment cannot reach the crime.

The devil is much better served in the world than God. If you go to a play-house in winter you are warm, if to a church, cold.

All great human things have been of slow growth, and developed by necessity or luxury, as architecture. No man, however gifted, can sit down and form a perfect system. For

the most part, the theoretical improvements suggested have been practically tried, and failed.

A very stern kind of justice ought to be administered on incompetent public servants, or ministers of state. It ought to be made *dangerous* to be incompetent in high office, when the immense interests involved are considered. This is a *right* principle of government.

It is a great mistake and injustice to regulate fiscal policy exclusively for the benefit of trade; there is no necessary connection between that and general prosperity; it may enable a few rich men to grow richer, but does not benefit, *in anything like the same proportion*, the large class not engaged in trade.

Nothing is more clear than that the opinions of men are tried, not by their wisdom or ability,

but by the power of those who hold them to enforce or promote them.

It seems as if nations were still in their childhood ; they quarrel and fight about trifles.

Time rushes past with one like a wild horse, and the years as telegraph posts, seen from a railway train ; and yet to another living in the same house, the years may seem long and weary.

Were God a capricious being, we should see constant prodigies in earth and heaven, and man would be ever in fear lest the earth should be destroyed ; but knowing that the divine plans are laid with long foresight and wisdom, and carried out with perfect patience, man acts with security ; and thus the wicked depend in their projects upon the forbearance they despise ; considering not that this very forbearance ren-

ders the ultimate adjustment of all things the more certain and terrible to them.

“Time is Money” can be said with no more truth than that Time is Learning, or any other good. It is a desecration of the word, inasmuch as Time is more Heaven than Money.

When we sometimes complain of the parsimoniousness of the expenditure of rich men, we should enquire how they were brought up, and whether for them to live more sumptuously would not be to do violence to their early habits. All great changes are morally dangerous.

Through death is immortality. Great books die temporarily to live for ever: Foster says that one of his books was unnoticed, except by one review, and that the *Eclectic*; his own organ.

In the contemplation of eternity life seems

very short; it seems as if we should die to-morrow.

To forgive trespasses is not only to forgive personal ones, but, like God, to forgive general ones; to entertain love and good will to all, however they may misconduct themselves.

If the time spent in party controversies were devoted to the public good, what great things might be accomplished.

A man to be conspicuous, or shot at, must advance to the front ranks; he must hold the extremes of opinion. Milton's contemporary fame rested not on his universal but temporary opinions.

The power of christianity as the friend of the poor has never been developed.

It is remarkable how much *mightier* is the fame of men of genius than that of others, when it is considered through what fogs and obscurations it has struggled. Such men owe little or nothing of their fame to the world, whilst almost all other famous men are indebted to the world for their remembrance.

The publication in the newspapers of all the depraved actions done in the world, tends, I believe, more than anything else, to corruption of manners and insensibility to vice.

How far a single good Samaritan action may atone for a thoughtless life it is not for us to say; but the attempt to do one for such a purpose would at once destroy its efficacy.

If the minds of those persons who have the most reputation for common sense were vivified by one of the ideas common to men of genius,

they would lose their balance and self-possession. It requires very great sense to be calm, collected, and reasonable whilst seeing so far and so much.

Each despised and persecuted man for Christ's sake, will be as Christ to his persecutors in the day of judgment.

Wit is a great solvent. A person may find his way through the most abstruse things by the light of wit.

There can be no doubt that this age of speed and progress has been fatal to many of the absurdities of a pedantic philosophy. It is an age of *practical directness*. Let this spirit be as much introduced into religion as it is into business, and great reforms will soon arise.

There are so many people attempting to get into the Temple of Fame at the same time,

that a man must really elbow his way into it to succeed at once, whatever his merit may be ; but this the man of true genius seldom if ever does.

Though the world has been so crowded, there have in fact been few men in it, and we may almost converse with them as a family circle. They sit now on thrones raised high above their fellows, though during their lives their voices were scarcely heard amidst the din of other men, who *seemed* to be the rulers of the world.

I like to introduce to new scenes and new life, and to create my own impressions of these scenes on the mind ; hence, I like the society of the simple, and should choose such for my companions for life. Who would like to enter life with one who had learnt everything, and that in his or her own way ; who had seen almost everything, and whose sources of fresh enjoy-

ment were consequently nearly exhausted at the very time when they should be commencing?

Education consists more in what is left untaught than in what is taught. Men and women learn until they become incapable of what is noble and devoted.

There are several kinds of weeping, as of cries. There is the weeping of tenderness, of self-will, of passion, and even of pride.

The entire strength of the poetical character is in its *feeling*; by its allowed superiority we have fine feeling elevated by consent above mere intellect. It is the triumph of love and feeling over mere justice, a principle.

Perhaps religious profession of a certain sort has injured religion more than the efforts of its

adversaries. I should like to see the time when the only profession of Christianity was Christian practice.

Tell me what are the judgments formed by a man on others, and I will tell you what he is himself.

I believe the dogmatic notions of the Christian Church will be found to be fundamentally erroneous in the Eternal State. I mean not so much as to their truth, but as to their absolute necessity to salvation; and not only so, but that there will be ages of the Church in which God will make foolish the wisdom of the Church as conspicuously as He has already done that of the world. All this, however, will spring from a more enlightened interpretation of Scripture. "He that doeth righteousness is righteous." "He that knew his master's will, and did it not, shall be beaten with many stripes."

The thorough knowledge of a subject bears an exact comparison to the thorough knowledge of a building, all its rooms, furniture, and passages, so that with perfect ease the master of it can walk to any part of the house, and know exactly where he will find what he wants : so knowledge of science should be pursued.

When two men meet, face of earth talks to face of earth, as they stand on the face of the earth, and their probable topic is the appearance of the face of the earth.

There are extraordinary circumstances and places about us which will become noted in after times, but which are now disregarded; as a large painting, which near at hand appears a mass of blotches, shows at a distance its excellencies. Men and things when moving down the stream of time are lost in a crowd, where kings cannot be distinguished from common men.

To look at everything in the world as though just born into it seems to be the secret of originality.

Men should belong to no party but that of Christ Jesus.

How many thousands of great men in their ²day, connected with the great cities of antiquity, are forgotten, whilst a despised and murdered prophet lives as an oracle to the end of time. The world has its histories, and notables, and worthies, and God has His. He seems to have had a perpetual controversy with man. Men of least skill in the world, whom the *world*, as a world of *self-interest*, could *best* have dispensed with, are advanced to highest honour, and the world is destined to hang upon the lips of Paul the tent-maker, and Peter the fisherman.

Envy is badge of honour worn by the wisest and best men.

What greater degradation can there be to mankind, in this imperfect state, than that, from the day of birth to death, intimate friends and relations see not each other in whole : they may see each other's hands and face, and the rest of them enveloped in a mass of cloth or muslin, and that is all. No wonder that one of the results of the redemption of man is that he shall know as he is known.

According to the laws of compensation in nature, there is reason to believe that men who have an intuitive perception, and an indefinable authority in their manner, are denied the gift of words ; whilst others, not greatly gifted, are capable of eloquence.

I have observed that men, whose conduct and manner are disagreeable to me, are the same to other people ; it is therefore foolish to concern oneself about them, as though personal indignity

were intended. The proper sentiment is that of pity, and we can trust the world at large to assign them their right position.

Whether it is a credit to a man to change his opinions for the better, depends upon whether he does so upon *right* reasons. Some men err, because they can see through the weak arguments of others holding contrary opinions, as others are right because they cannot see through them—right by accident. If the clear-sighted man comes at last to these opinions, it will not be for their fallacious reasons, but for some of his own.

God's religion is love—man's is censoriousness.

It may be doubted whether those parts of a man's character, in which he acts the most unconsciously, are not his strongest and truest.

The deepest and most heart-stirring poetry may be nursed in ages seemingly least poetical; for the true mind is a nonconformer, and the soulless forms with which it comes in contact are like dry sticks which strike a fire.

The best men must be both mixed and original. They must be mixed, because they take up the good part of all opinions and systems; and original, because there are few such.

Those who take pleasure in polemic controversy may be said to favour the dust of Zion in a sense peculiarly their own.

The great man is known as much by what he does not do as by what he does.

The most wonderful interpositions of Providence in behalf of men are probably those which are never known or esteemed as such;

they may appear trifling circumstances, and are numerous.

A man is required to forgive his open enemies, but nowhere his false friends.

The growth of a plant is not by patch-work ; every part grows alike, and all the life proceeds at once, from one source ; so should it be with the life and soul of man : not grown by maxims, but by draughts of the Spirit of the source of all life.

The best men often, by one hour's thought, influence a great part of life.

Religion is like music ; a thousand inferior voices together will not make music equal to one superior voice ; so a thousand merely moral men will not equal one truly spiritual.

I am inclined to think that a few leading philosophers, poets, and even statesmen of the day, of no authority with the Church of the day, will be regarded by the Church of a future age as in advance of the Church of the day.

An artist, by a well drawn painting, has the power to represent a character, in all its clearness, which it often takes a three-volume novel to illustrate.

Imaginative minds are the most timid and nervous. Most of the perturbations of men's minds, from fear of danger, are the effects of imagination. The pleasures of imagination have been written, and there is room for a poem on its horrors; but that is not a poetic subject.

The leaders of parties in religion are generally wiser and better men than their followers.

Religion being the ground and soil of man's highest life, in that soil should the seed of every good principle be sown, and then buried—hid, as it were, not only from the world, but from the man himself—for it is necessary that a seed should be hid from the sight before it can produce the flowers and fruit: the deeper it is buried the more robust the plant.

Notwithstanding that there are in the Scriptures the sublimest poetical compositions, we do not find anywhere the maudlin modern glorification of genius and the poet.

As men engaged in dark enterprises, such as midnight theft or murder, upon the approach of a man with a light, will do their utmost to extinguish it, though at the expense of life; so it is with the true christian in the world.

To reward men for good actions is a sort of

libel on human nature ; nevertheless, it ranks with the class of libels which are true. Were all men good, and true, and honest, such special rewards would be absurd.

Imagination is the mind's sense. When acquiring knowledge, the practice of transporting oneself into the scenes described by the historian, and endeavouring to live for the time in them, is the most delightful and profitable method of study. In this way, a man *feels* and *tastes* his knowledge. Imagination is that mental taste which renders intellectual food pleasant.

No man was ever yet able to answer silence ; and when men bestow abuse instead of argument it is the only effectual answer.

Confidence in God produces a placid prepos-

session for all existing things, whether individual, social, or political.

Is it not necessary that ministers should frequently hear sermons as well as make them ?

Man sows the seed of the tears and blood of others, and reaps from it a harvest of riches for himself. God sows his own tears and blood, and man reaps from it a harvest of blessedness.

A system of universal benevolent surveillance, by which all large communities should be divided into smaller ones, and every individual in the nation known and cared for, would be a splendid achievement, social, moral, mental, and religious.

In its lower acceptation, the fulfilment of prophecy is not the production of a monstrous thing, but a natural event, the result of certain prin-

ciples. A prophet, or true teacher, is but a man who sees, *without doubt*, the results of certain existing elements in future ages; to predict the exact day or hour is a supernatural gift: but that man approaches the nearest the inspired prophet who most certainly foresees the results of great principles in future time.

As persons devoid of one faculty have generally others strong in proportion, so, often the absence of the power of musical expression is accompanied by a greater internal or mental music.

Man's chief unhappiness proceeds from his wishing more than justice; for a moment's reflection would convince him that perfect justice must eventually be done, or God would cease to exist.

So much of the property of a state is artificial,

dependent upon capital—not alone, but combined with skill, character, and civil order—that, to offer violence to it, is to destroy it. It is like a beautiful crystallization, which, exposed to certain influences, dissolves. If all were restored to primitive chaos, the same state would result in process of time; but that may be destroyed in a day of madness, which it may take ages to restore. Violent democratic reformers should reflect that they could never enjoy that of which they would wish to deprive others; everything would become as useless to them as the several parts of a watch without the mainspring; for the mainspring of a state is order and public confidence.

The greater perfection to which a human being attains, the greater number of changes must he pass through—various gradations of being—so that he will be quite a different man at one time and at another; the more rapid the

progress, the more obvious and frequent these changes of character.

Much stress is laid upon the dignity of an ancient family. Is not one man's family as ancient as another's? Not exactly, in the proper sense. In an ancient family there is a higher guarantee that the descent has been legitimate for a longer period. In this sense it is almost true, that some men's blood "has run through scoundrels ever since the flood."

If there is a difference between godly men and religious men, it is this: the former seek only God's approbation, the latter their fellow men's.

A man must learn how to live himself, before he can either live for others, or teach others to live themselves. The reason why the present age is no greater is, that so many men live for

others before they have learnt to live themselves; hence they are dwarfish, and live less for others. Solitude and contemplation are essential to mental greatness and moral goodness.

The greatest manifestation of genius is to embody in that which the mind can grasp in a moment the history of a life. Thus a volume of history may be written in a piece of sculpture; a life of emotions in a single painting; an era of ideas in a few lines of poetry. It is this which brings man nearest to the state of spiritual existence, where things are known by intuition. The poet is the pioneer of the spiritual life which is manifesting itself gradually in the world.

Irrespective of sincerity, there are certain phases of disease in the human mind which admit of inharmonious association on every sub-

ject, but which the mind in perfect health rejects ; as, for instance, fanaticism in religion. These diseases, like many others, are infectious ; but woe to the Church when *religious insanity* prevails.

The magnificence of the art of sculpture consists in this, that the artist conceives a brilliant idea, and then, as with a magician's wand, he touches the marble, and that idea is embodied substantially and permanently. It is like a beautiful spirit arrested in space, and, by a magical power, embodied to sight and sense ; no art brings the spiritual so near the material.

Some men's minds are like the polished seal, they reflect outward objects—the characters and opinions of other men. Other men's minds are like the same seal, on which some figure is deeply cut ; they impress the stamp of their own thought and character on others.

When we were helpless children, God cared for us ; as we begin to care for ourselves, we are worst off : we had better become children again.

The philosopher often discloses to other men the *reason* for their own conduct, of which they are themselves ignorant. The real history of nearly every party would consist in a philosophical biography of the mind of its founder. There are few minds which are really *foundation* thinkers ; these minds generally sway the rest of the world.

Every living man and woman is the last link, or one of the last links, of a living chain of prolific ancestors, all of whom have attained adult age, traced up in an arithmetically increasing number the further we recede back, until the middle period, and then gradually diminishing up to the first pair : not one link

of which has ever failed ; every man and woman is thus the sum and final product of all these foregone ages and men. Is it not somewhat humiliating, from this point of view, if the chain should be snapped with us ?

Perhaps the greatest injury and injustice done in this world is that which the hypocritical professor of godliness does to the character of the truly godly ; it appears to me that all other injustices in the world are insignificant compared to this.

Who would wish to go to heaven in the strength of his own merits ? To me the idea appears revolting. To have nothing but that to depend on through eternal ages, appears to me a torture, like that of condemning a living spirit to be eternally chained to a dead and corrupting body.

Ancient vessels have descended to us, because they have been for many years associated with their contents, which have been greatly prized, and the greater our appreciation of the contents, the more jealous are we that they are conveyed in the old authentic vessel: without the latter, we should doubt the genuineness of the former. Why have those grotesque mis-shapen Dutch bottles been perpetuated, except that we have associated with them the genuine Schiedam? So is it with forms of worship. He is but a bold and reckless man who would do violence to the affections, and prejudices, if you will, of a religious people, by any fancied improvement of its liturgies or forms of worship, which have been for ages associated with the inestimable virtues they have so long enshrined.

For many years I fondly believed that high principles of honour regulated the conduct of what the world calls gentlemen, or those

whose education had taught them to aspire their "h's;" but, alas ! subsequent experience has convinced me that, with few exceptions, in this class, such principles have not survived the age of chivalry ; now-a-days, the man who practices them is considered a kind of Don Quixote or knight-errant, and fares very badly in respect of his worldly interests. I am now convinced that such principles, which constitute the real gentleman, are quite as commonly to be found in the humblest walk of life ; nay, that just in proportion as men are successfully engaged in the pursuit or administration of office or employment, they are so generally from the sacrifice of the highest qualities of our nature. The true high souled gentleman, who will not compromise a good principle for any earthly consideration, is now almost confined to those who practice, in contradistinction from those who merely profess, the Christian religion.

There have been men in the world of strong cast-iron-like character, and of a singularly great ambition, who, having deeply stamped their own impress upon men of their generation, have sought to perpetuate their rule through all time. Inverting the order of nature, which, from one spring of life, produces an infinitely diversified aspect, these men have attempted to mould and stereotype a system which shall, ever after, bear precisely the same lineaments, morally, as their own physiognomy, physically. An able commentator, on this phase of ambition, M. Michelet, the celebrated Frenchman, has designated it *Machinism*, or the *Spirit of Death*. It is a spirit which belongs to the history of the human mind, and we find its greatest development in *Jesuitism*. I can compare it to nothing better than an attempt, with an iron grasp, to strangle posterity, and thus, by the production of civil and moral death, to produce a death-like uniformity. They decree that posterity

shall only have the life they have bequeathed. It is man usurping the place of God. The world can do very well without human systems : they are a positive curse. For instance, before Loyola or Wesley there was life in the world, and there would have been still more life if neither of them had endeavoured to bind the spirits of future generations. If either were perfect types of Christianity, the case might be different ; and such a character can alone justify their pretensions. God's sole representative might claim such a power, and he only. To see the error of the principle, we have only to admit that these men were really great and good ; but were they not eminently original in their ideas ? Were they not free, and that made their greatness ? their dissimilarity from all their predecessors their freedom ? Suppose them tied down from childhood to a different system, what is the result ? They lose their own life, their own freedom ; they become

merged in another; they had not been themselves, but the machines of another's will; and so is it with all their followers. All those inherent powers which would have made them great, are sapped,—nipped in the bud: they become echoes of another's voice; his shadow; no substance; no body; no man; but a skeleton. Roots, which would have shot up into majestic trees, are all cut, and reduced to the dull uniformity of a cropped hedge-row. Who sees not that by this process life becomes extinct? I point out a great heresy; the worshipping and following of human guides, of Paul, of Apollos, of Cephas, instead of Christ only; and there can scarcely be a greater benefit conferred upon the world than to tear away the mask of life which hides behind it the cold and pallid face of death. It is a system which is sapping our vitals; and all the commotions and revolutions, to which we are getting naturalized, spring from the attempt of

the life of a people to throw off the incubus of human names and systems, and return to the primitive spirit.

Surely a grand-child is one of the most beautiful objects upon which the eye of aged parents can dwell ; an inseparable branch of the common tree. Is it not the continuation of that infancy which they themselves have but outgrown ? Is not to despise them as for an infant to despise another infant of the same blood ? Is it not like the river approaching the ocean refusing to mingle its water with those which have bubbled from the same fountain head ? How beautiful to see age just tottering off the stage of life, clasping, with affection, the infant coming in his name and in his strength in continuation to act his part when he is gone ; to represent and speak from the grave for him. How beautiful are the buddings of promise and the leaves of hope

in the old and shattered oak, which has borne the storms of many years, yet seems to extend its venerable arms to protect and shelter the sprigs which shoot from his venerable side.

There are some yet who would pronounce railways an evil. This is hardly credible, but so it is. The same kind of people, we presume, who would have objected to most of the improvements of which we are in the enjoyment. To say the least, they must be very slow people. Whatever the world may think of them in other respects, can they be sane on this point? Let the anti-railway literature, if any such there be, be rightly judged. Let no young and foolishly sentimental men persuade us that they subtract from the sum of poetry in the world; they have done more for the world than all the battles that were ever fought in it; and out of a few and very far remote battles Homer has extracted the greatest of epics. Let any man blessed with

moderate foresight look down the vista of time, and he may see a thousand gigantic shapes, striding across the path, as spirits of the rail. What would these hyper-poetic spirits say? Consistently they anathematize all steam-power. When that shall be superseded by some more potent still we give them leave, but not till then. Would they presume to mount the stool of individual importance, and put the clock of time back several degrees? Would they say that the time which has been added to life, so that men begin to live, within their threescore years and ten, a life as long, in event and interest, as in the age of Methuselah, should not have been added? Do not you see that the channels of intercommunication, in a nation, are its veins and arteries; that its people are the vital current, and the metropolis the heart of the body politic? Rapidity in transit, in intercourse, in business, whilst it causes each drop of blood, or individual man, to diffuse the

more life, so it vitalizes the existence of the whole body or community. See you not that, though the change may have been ushered in by fever, and even delirium, the superincumbent humours, which were the sources of lassitude and ill-health, have been thrown off, and that renewed health and vigour have made the nation "like a giant refreshed with new wine, and like a strong man to run a race?" See you not that each individual, and consequently the community, is living a double life at least? Are not public and private events rapid, startling, and novel? If elephants began to fly, we should expect some changes in the animal world; an annual migration of such birds would require very large trees for their support: so the platform of governments must be enlarged and strengthened, or some monster human migrations from Germany, or France, America, or elsewhere, will break them down. Those who find plenty to do can do twice as much; and

those who have less to do can do it twice as easily. All may have more business, and all may have more leisure. But the great outcry on this subject is in favour of Nature. Kind friends, Nature can care for herself; you need not fear, revolutionizing as is the age, for her throne; that can never be shaken by man. There are yet places where even the eagle has not built her nest, wild and solitary; you need not despair of finding such a place if need be. Suppose not that all Nature's sympathies are expended upon the lackadaisical love-sick swains, the shepherds who pipe to their flocks, and compose pastorals celebrating their beauties, or bewailing their unfortunate love. Nature has a large heart; and though she may find a snug and quiet place therein for these fair-weather naturalists, yet we dare not say that the engineer who throws a tube across her yawning chasms, or draws lines of care across her face, is not her greatest favorite. Nature is in

earnest; she is progressive, and waits upon man. Does Nature smile less, think you, and look less pleasant, amid the green hedgerows, parks, and gardens of merry and thickly peopled old England, than she does in the trackless desert of Sahara, or the savage fastnesses and wilds of North America? Nature is maternal, and we are her children: when we are industrious and prosperous, then she always smiles; when we are idle and dissipated, and when we are not, then she looks forlorn, sad, melancholy, and haggard: she takes man and teaches him her secrets, whereby he is able to rival the swiftness of her eagle or the strength of her elephant. Is that to be taken as a sign of her displeasure? Nature is in earnest for the welfare of her offspring, and regards with approbation him who rifles her bosom of the secret gifts she has there concealed, and enriches her children with her stores, rather than him who sits lost in reverie, whilst contemplating her

manifold works. Besides we vindicate railways from the charge of being anti-poetic. There is poetry in other things beside crocuses, daffodils, or even Peter Bells, with all reverence for the great and good bard departed. The deepest well-springs of poetry are to be looked for neither in abstract Nature, nor in quiescent and contemplative man, but in the passions of men as they are working out the great problems of existence, and almost actuated by a divine insanity. Much of such poetry has been extracted from imagined individual experience, as in the case of Goëthe's *Faust* and Bayley's *Festus*; but bodies of men are beginning to be similarly actuated, and a great drama is about to open: the recent continental revolutions are but the prologue. Railways are fast hastening on the consummation of events; they are causing every heart to beat more rapidly; and, as such, we calmly consider them to have in them more poetry than any other modern event of material

character. Our prediction is, and we do not hazard much when we say, that there is approaching a far brighter era for British bards; but it will be one for the prophetic bard; for him who can sit, as it were, on the wheel of events, undisturbed, and sing of the world's phases, the world's wants, the world's remedy, and universal redemption.

Nature plants not trees in the soil; she drops a little seed; if the soil be good the tree grows, if bad the seed had better perish. Nature gives bullion, but she gives no coins. I do not pretend to have a mint; I have a little bullion; and if any think it worth their while to coin it themselves, they may do so.

Reasonable and sensible men should allow enthusiasm to influence them only in the greatest of all matters; that is religion. With

the world rolling round in infinite space, with multitudes being flung from her bosom every hour into a limitless eternity, with the forming power of every moment on the destiny of that eternity, how insignificant does every earthly object of ambition and desire become! It is the folly of men who are standing awaiting the presence of their judge to receive their final sentence, amusing themselves in the interval before His appearance, in catching gnats and butterflies, or dressing themselves up in the tinsel adornments of a clown.

One great principle which Christianity teaches, is that all humanity is a part of myself, because I am human, and all humanity is divine, because Christ is human. When I hear the cry of humanity in distress, I hear the cry at once of divinity and humanity: if I turn a deaf ear, it is humanity disowning humanity; and I had rather be the Lazarus rejected, than the Dives

rejecting: for the latter is guilty of sacrilege to the divine, and of treason to the human: if he has disowned humanity, humanity will disown him, and as he has, at the same time, disowned divinity, divinity will disown him. The suppliant sufferer resembles Christ, who came to His own, and His own received Him not: He, with the clothing of human and divine, comes to them, and, if they reject His representative, He feels a cognate anguish of spirit. Hence, said our Saviour, a cup of cold water given to such is given to Him; refused to such, is refused to Him.

As truly as sight reveals to the blind new objects, hearing to the deaf new sounds, so truly does the new birth and life of religion *reveal* new sights and sounds to the believer. Christ lives in him, and he sees no longer with his eyes, but with Christ's eyes; hears no longer with his natural ears, but with Christ's. The true Chris-

tian revelation is not only in the Bible ; it is in the soul of man : the revelation is objective and subjective ; objective in the word, subjective in the man. "No man knoweth the Father but the Son, and he to whom the Son shall *reveal* Him." "How is it," asked the disciples, "that Thou wilt *reveal* Thyself to us and not unto the world ?" "No man cometh unto Me, except the Father draw him." By Christ, and the revelation of Himself in the heart, man is regenerated.

All the mysteries of matter and of mind, all that is sacred in emotion, all that is thrilling in affection, all that is commanding in foresight, prophecy, and inspiration ; every line of beauty, every chord of sympathy, and every aspiration after perfection, belongs to the domain of poetry. The poet's song, if a true one, is the utmost wave of time beating on the shore of eternity ; it marks the limit of the age's attainment, and,

with uplifted crest, beckons onwards; it is a superior vision, which, penetrating through all forms and obscurities, sees the essences and destinies of things. No fiction, used as a vehicle to convey poetic truth, can ever approach the reality itself; because it is the eternal music of the universal destinies of worlds, the expressive march of all created things, in the harmony of the divine will, to their consummation, faintly heard in the innermost soul.

Man, when viewed in his relation to the universe, is less than the ant viewed in relation to this globe, utterly insignificant. Viewed out of his relation to God he is "crushed before the moth." His divine origin and divine similitude impart to him all his dignity and value. Viewed in his connection with Christ he becomes the delegate and representative of Deity; by the indwelling of Christ in his heart, Godlike—a theatre wherein God displays His highest glory.

As Christ was, so is he on the earth, divinity's shrine—a reflected glory of the Eternal. The depth to which man may now fall is as infinite as the height to which he may rise; to him appertains either God's greatest dishonour or His greatest glory. The angels are God's servants; redeemed men are admitted to the dignity of sons, by virtue of the elder brotherhood of Christ; his prayers are the prayers of a child to its Father.

Nearly half of human life is spent in a state of unconsciousness, with the moon and stars keeping their vigils above it: during that period all human distinctions are levelled. Dreams, as visitants from an unseen world, hold uninterrupted sway, and cause the monarch to beg alms, whilst the beggar sways a sceptre; one awakes to liberty and pleasure, the other to disappointment and pain; and yet both to a waking dream. Existence in this life is but a superior

kind of dream ; for as the body sometimes overpowers the mind, so it always oppresses it. He is most awake who looks at all things with a spiritual eye, and sees most clearly the dreaminess of life. All earthly-minded men, when they shuffle off this earthly coil, will find that it has been but as a dream when one awaketh, and then the monarch may really become what he dreamt he was, and the beggar too. Thus are many taught in dreams, and the words realized, " We are such stuff as dreams are made of ; our life is rounded with a sleep."

The man who acts most consistently with his nature, influences most his fellows. Neither virtue nor vice are taught by profession, but by practice and example. Not words but deeds. Nature is a great teacher, and is for the most part silent.

By far the most valuable blessings are the

most common. That the observation is a trite one only confirms it. Duly considered, such thoughts are calculated to have the greatest practical effect, and to heal the most wounds in society. The mere humanities of life, to say nothing of its divinities, rightly used, are the most valuable of its possessions, and the culture of them, within the reach of all, will yield a richer crop of happiness than all the adventitious pleasures put together. The great teacher said, "A man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things he possesseth;" a maxim equally true in a natural and a spiritual sense. For illustration, what sort of man would he be who would forsake his family for a throne, or the monarch who would prefer the loss of his family to his throne?

The policeman and the hangman are more thoroughly thrown out of the sympathies of men than any others, because they represent

stern law without a trace of mercy ; he that falls into the clutches of one has no hope of mercy or justice, it may be but from his judges ; of the other, but from God.

None who knows anything of human nature, doubts that Christianity is designed to be the great remover of social evils. Its reflex influence has been mighty ; and men have adopted many of its precepts to advance their own ends : but unless the principles of religion are carried out in her own spirit of Love, she will repudiate them, and they will not stand.

"Tis well that man will not be judged by man in the final account, except by that one Man who is also God. What diversities are there in birth, education, natural endowments, and occasions ; what diversities are occasioned by religious teachers ; some deceived, others deceiving. God sees every emotion and act, and weighs the

cause, the aggravation, the extenuation. Punishment and reward will be in no two cases alike; and will, probably, in every case, proceed from the natural state of man as he leaves the world, and from the proportion in which God is present or absent. God is the source of all blessedness, and, therefore, in proportion as He is present or absent, will be the blessedness or the curse:—
“As the tree falls so it lies.”

How many are there who live the lives of animals! It is the only life that stirs within them. Their souls lie embedded and torpid: as animals they are slaves to their bodily organization, and serve, by nature, their appetites and propensities. God's rational image is nevertheless stamped on every man, and that is the door to his spiritual image. Passion is strong, but reason, if regarded, is stronger; but reason is only the door or vestibule to spirituality; not to go beyond that is to remain a higher animal

—a reasoning one. Resting in passion has slain its thousands, in reason its tens of thousands. Reason is not a god, but a guide to lead us to God—the highest Reason. He who makes his own reason a God is a self-worshipper—selfish. He pursues his own worldly interests, and sacrifices passion on the altar of selfishness. The votary of passion is a creature of impulse, and of the two is the most loveable, because the more disinterested: hence the open sinners were better than the Pharisees; types of classes in all ages. The highest reason is the most self-sacrificing and dependent, as a child on its parent. Self-sacrifice in the cause of vice is nearer virtue than calculating self-seeking; it has least to unlearn, is most likely to feel one of the lost whom Christ came to seek and save; whilst the devotee of reason is deluded by that self-applause which will praise when a man doeth well for himself, and feels not lost but safe. To feel safe without God is

certain loss. "He that seeketh his life shall lose it, and he that loseth his life shall find it."

The true philosopher's stone is Time: it will turn all things into gold. How many, like the old Alchemists, daily pursue distant objects, which dance like the *ignis fatuus* before them, neglecting the riches which lie at their own doors! Follow Carlyle's advice: "Do the thing next you;" or, rather, the best thing next you, and employ each moment, and you will wonder at your own doings and your wealth. However mighty your genius, you cannot afford a moment's loss; the greater your capacity the greater your loss, inasmuch as that moment was worth more to you than to your fellows: not that your work should be incessant; play may sometimes be next you, and then it is your duty and interest; but when you have felt the hilarity of the draught of pleasure,

then is the time to work again. To waste time is one mark of a fool; to redeem it, one mark of the wise; although it may be but of the wise in their own generation. The greatest works and the greatest reputations have been founded on redeemed moments: see that huge pile, the wonder of an age; redeemed moments planned it, cut sod after sod its foundations, shaped stroke upon stroke its stones, placed stone upon stone its superstructure, and hoist after hoist raised and placed the top stone upon it. Go and do likewise. "Go to the ant thou sluggard, learn her ways and be *wise*."

Amid the buffetings of the world man requires an object on which to repose with confidence and with a mutual affection; this he finds in marriage. The more implicit, kind of confidence and the finer shades of affection are not otherwise to be found in the world.

Marriage is instituted that the varied rays of confidence and affection may be united mutually into one focus, and we know the powerful effect of such concentration in the sun's rays drawn through a burning glass. This concentration, when produced by love, is too intense and dazzling to admit of any minute analysis of character; its nature forbids it: whatever interferes with confidence is alien to it, contrary to the purpose for which it is implanted in the breast. The lover must not and cannot see with the eyes of others, for love is correctly represented as blind; blind to defects but magnifying excellences. Ignorance is said by some to be the mother of devotion; it is the mother of love; and here it may be truly said, "when ignorance is bliss, 'tis folly to be wise." It is of vital importance to the happiness of mankind, a haven of rest, an ark to the soul. If you have it, keep it; willingly you would not be free. Some, boasting of their wisdom, say.

that love will certainly evaporate after marriage; they should lament their folly: its principles at first, if kept, are so throughout, and so some of the best men have found it. If this love is lost after marriage, or permanently diminished, 't were much better never to have been married; t'is misery doubled; the buffetings in the world the same, and home no haven, but probably a fresh trial; the remembrance of sweet hours past, the grievous disappointment dashing to the ground the cup once at the lips, all make such a case doubly miserable. In the decalogue of earthly happiness it is the highest and greatest law broken.

We may almost envy the poor and afflicted; they are in the best school for life. Trials and afflictions are to wean us from the world, to draw our affections to Heaven; and happy is the man who acknowledges his Father's hand

in them, so that whatever his outward condition, he is still poor in spirit.

I think it not unlikely, that some who may have been placed in circumstances where theoretic religion is unknown, all their lives, but who have lived in disinterested benevolence and humanity, may be judged as the recording angel is represented to have dealt with the oath of Uncle Toby.

One of the most ingenious heresies in the world, is the estimate put on talent. Because a man possesses a great talent for speaking, writing, or working, in any department of life, it is considered that he is a great man beyond his fellows; it is not considered that the unknown man, who possesses, but suppresses or diverts, the same talent, may be much greater; the one is talented, and so is the other, but the last adds, perhaps, to his talent wisdom. Take all

those who exhibit great talent under the promptings of human applause ; it is a weakness, and though useful in their day, they are not great. Apply the same rule to those whose motive is wealth, ambition, and numerous other interested motives, and they will be found in the same category, even though the world has rung with their names ; they may be useful and excellent in their sphere, but they are not the wisest, nor does it follow that they are the most talented. The man whose worldly motive is the strongest, with inferior talent, may excel him who has equal talent, but a weaker motive in that direction. We can form no due estimate of the amount of ability exercised in cultivating the moral man more than the intellectual, in pruning the motive and eradicating weeds, though these are the better husbandmen. Wisdom teaches us to acquire a disinterested motive ; talent teaches us to emulate others in the world's esteem ; to gain that, most men think,

speaking, writing, and acting, but to gain the other, we have need often to abstain from all; the one gains the world's applause, the other the testimony of conscience. This is to each of us the period of temptation in the wilderness, and it requires an exalted faith and an heroic firmness, to resist the offered temptation. Many a poor man who might have been rich has done it, and he has attained that for which talent was conferred,—wisdom. Wisdom is the empress, talent the servant. Little would it have availed to have sacrificed wisdom for a *bon mot*, a great speech, a round of applause, or full coffers. Intellectual strength produces talent; spiritual strength, either with or without intellectual, produces wisdom; and between the wise man without talent and the talented man without wisdom there is no comparison. True greatness consists, in all things, more in what is left undone than in what is done. For talented men we are obliged, often, to mingle with

respect a shade of pity, for we fear that they are not always, or frequently, blessed, because they sacrifice their best interests whilst they think they are pursuing them. There are three great classes in the world: the unwise talented; the theoretically wise; (those who acknowledge the vanity of earthly pursuits, but have not resolution to carry out their convictions: they are neutral;) and the practically wise. One lesson we may learn from this: that we add as little as possible to the burden under which talented men labour, by moderating our applause, lest we forward in them a fate resembling that of Herod, who, when the people shouted and said "It is the voice of a god," was struck by Jehovah, and eaten up with worms.

The greatness of nature is seen in that the description of its works cannot be heightened by comparison with any of man's works; this

is often attempted, but always signally fails. When we have said "the sun, the moon, the stars," we have said all that in a natural point of view, consistently with the best taste, the subject will admit of. Some have compared the stars to lamps in the sky ; but this is an obvious degradation of the subject. Moral things alone are superior to natural ; both are divine, so that in all ages, those who have given the best descriptions of natural objects, (of course I mean poetic,) have done so by comparison with moral things. They who regard nature as simply material, have, it is obvious, no sources of pleasure except those which the natural qualities of beauty, grandeur, brightness, magnitude, distance and usefulness can create, and have no means of bringing the objects home to the mind, save by material comparisons ; they can view them only with the same kind of feeling as any other object exhibiting human contrivance,—a mere intel-

lectual appreciation. From this sense has sprung that abundant crop of petty conceits which the 18th century exhibits. But nature is not a great workshop, or even gallery of art and science, but a great temple. Admit a Creator, possessing, in an infinite degree, every spiritual as well as intellectual attribute, —love for instance,—and every object proceeding from His hand possesses a deep spiritual significance; it cannot be otherwise, for when He works, He works with His whole nature; a perfect being cannot work imperfectly, or in parts; all nature becomes thus an emanation or outbeaming of Divinity: by this element alone can the designs of nature be ennobled; the sun becomes an emblem of the Deity; the moon the genius of Providence; and the stars symbols of worshipping spirits in the court of heaven: all nature becomes a great school of spiritual tuition, and there is no limit to the poetic dignity of such description: nature be-

comes: a part of the word of God, and a limitless field for the soul of man to expatiate in; this is truly to "look up through nature to nature's God;" an expression rather bald, by the way. Wordsworth has been one of the latest to tread this path; it is his great merit that he had the soul and courage to renew it in a degenerate age; and, since his day, much of the poetry of this generation owes its chief merit to the same spirit.

The mental character of a man may be known when we meet him on a narrow causeway; a decisive one will take a certain direction, and adhere to it; a pliant one will be indecisive which side to take (that is where the London rule prevails not). If we would avoid collision with the first, we must, for the time, be pliant, with the last we must be decisive: two pliant people will duck about until they knock their heads together; two

decisive people will, if they have adopted the same side, strike at once. So we may learn a lesson in the ordinary affairs of life which will avoid much pain, and expedite business.

The poetic constitution consists in that harmonious balance of all the faculties, physical, intellectual, and spiritual, which enables its possessor to see every subject in its true light, with reference to the whole range of experience, human and divine, and thus to make music of it ; it is, in short, a knowledge of the voice of harmony, of the eternal and underlying meaning of all things. I care not whether such an one write or not, in verse or prose, he is a poet. Verse is his natural voice ; but more true poetry has been written in prose than verse. To suppose that every versifier is a poet, is like supposing every writer is a seer, every speaker an orator, every drummer a musician, or every man who puts on a royal

robe a king. Verse may be music to the ear ;
but poetry is music to the soul.

The professing Christian Church and the world were perhaps never more in appearance one, than they are now. My notion of a Christian is, that of one who is entirely devoted to the cultivation of a resemblance to Christ on earth, who seeks no great things for himself, but who goes about doing good, and elevating in every way the spiritual above the material, the eternal above the temporal ; one who lives a life of faith ; one who would not sacrifice a single good emotion for a kingdom. But the Church has now accepted the world's notion of a Christian, one who outwardly believes, goes to Church or Chapel, supports the cause, leads a moral life, and minds his own and other people's business ; the great mass of professing Christians are nothing more. Faith is a wonderfully ennobling, courage-inspiring thing,

but modern life shows most its want of faith, by its cowardly spirit, almost as prevalent in members of Churches, as in those who are not.

A man, though but a unit, would not be greater if all men were consolidated into one; for one man possesses in himself an immortal soul and the elements of infinite expansion.

There will be a time in the world's history, and whether it is the present time we know not, when every project of interest and ambition will be snapped by the trump of doom. How foolish will those then look who are absorbed in such projects; and yet we of the present time, whether it be the last or not, are equally foolish, for whether it be so or not, the end of life is with us the end of all our schemes, and that is always uncertain as to its time, though certain in event.

The thought of death as a salt seasons life, and prevents it from becoming stagnant and corrupt: life would else be like a pool without outlet, but it runs into a sweet and boundless ocean, gathering strength as it flows.

There are flitting thoughts, like swallows in the brain, which bring tidings of heavenly things; these are the life and soul of the mind, which once lost, cannot be recalled; they should be allowed to build their nests in our eaves; caught on the instant and recorded.

There are certain improprieties of life, not sins against God, but against good breeding, and against a high tone of thought and feeling, which are to be corrected in this world; and which a man is justified in frowning and living down by severe and proper checks, keeping himself at a proper distance, and showing by his actions, words, and looks, that low manners are

unpalatable to him, though in those who are in other respects excellent. There is a certain dignity in human nature to be observed in ordinary life, which ordinary life must preserve, and repulse everything which would degrade it. Amongst these rebukers are the highest and best friends of humanity, and not amongst those who take up, under all circumstances, the cause of their neighbours, without regarding how much wrong they may be doing to human nature in the aggregate, by encouraging the ignorance, foibles, and follies of those whom they seek to benefit.

I cannot approve the assumption of exclusive names by bodies calling themselves Christians, such as Evangelical, Benevolent, Good Samaritan; it is unbecoming and unworthy in followers of Christ, exciting a spirit of hostility or repulsion, a foolish obeisance paid to religious ignorance and clamour, and at entire variance with

humility ; it is a proclamation of self-righteousness, and a putting on without shame the garb of the Pharisee. Surely Christians are alone to be known by their lives, and "good wine needs no bush." This self-righteous spirit is one of the greatest hindrances to the spread of divine truth, because it ignores the universal humanity of Christianity.

To see all things in their true bearings and value is real greatness of mind ; and may exist with very humble natural endowments ; it is the effect of the spiritual enlightenment of the mind, and when the human mind is thus brought into correspondence with the divine mind, and the spirit dwells within, who can affix a limit to the revelations of things unseen which may be imparted ? It is not then the human mind dependent on its own unassisted power, but the divine working through and above the human ; the latter being the mere channel of

communication. In this way writings and deeds, seeming superhuman, have been produced by humble individuals, which may well be the astonishment of the wisest and greatest in this world's wisdom ; for the lowest mind under the spirit's afflatus is far greater in truth than the loftiest without it, inasmuch as it " sees light in God's light."

The operation of the mind on any subject resembles travelling on foot ; we see in the dim distance a desirable object, of which we have no clear perception ; we are led to travel towards it, and as we approach, it becomes clearer and clearer, until we at last come to a near perception and understanding of it. The difference between one man and another mainly consists in the objects he selects and the rapidity with which he travels towards them and leaves them in quest of other objects of interest.

Authors of originality resemble travellers who discover new countries and describe them to others; afterwards all may enter into the fruits of their labours, and by a little pains, though comparatively illiterate, know as much about the matter as the writer: so after Columbus discovered America, hordes of men have entered into his labours and reaped their fruits. The followers of Columbus may probably acquire far more knowledge of the country than he had, for he was an idealist; but to this idealist the world is indebted for a great part of its wealth and history. In this we see the real superiority of inventive and heroic genius over the mere power of acquisition and perception, a genius, when in high development, as rare as it is gigantic, which, without success, generally receives no acknowledgment, and with success, no reward; resembling, as it does, that faith in things unseen which has wrought in all ages such grand conquests over matter.

Some of the greatest of the ancient poets were remarkable for their superiority in the spirituality and their belief in the highest religion of their age. Most of our poets want this badge of their calling, which is a sacred one. The critics are responsible for much of this. The critics, as a class, have been immensely inferior to the poets, and yet have presumed to judge them—as writers in periodicals they necessarily more or less pander to a lower popular taste, and act the part of Aristophanes ridiculing Socrates in the clouds; thus they have assailed the greatest modern poets, and posterity has not “approved their sayings;” they have fostered a spirit of infidelity to great truths and great motives, and especially so in religion; making us a people less true to our national religion than any people in the world. Other people have for the most part held in highest honour those who have exalted their religion, whilst, with us, the road

to popularity and esteem has been made as far as possible secular, and the muse degraded. Our publishing trade has made letters pecuniary; the last thing which any noble author in prose or verse ever contemplates.

I don't know any greater instance of the intellectual folly of men, and especially of Theologians, than the wranglings about predestination and free-will. Well may Milton picture one of the employments of fallen angels to be contending on this subject, for it must much resemble the punishment of Sisyphus; it is, in fact, reasoning in a circle or discussing an infinite topic with a finite mind. My creed is a simple one; a host of Theologians will say a foolish one. I firmly believe in the universal knowledge and foreknowledge of God, and also in divine decrees from eternity, for these are essential to God's being and perfections; I as firmly believe in

man's free agency, for this is essential to his accountability, and both are clearly revealed; wherever the Scriptures enforce the one they do not ignore the other: but I hold that the subject is infinitely beyond human reason; I had almost said contrary to it, but I do not think it is so, because human reason believes in the omnipotence of God, that all things are possible to Him, except a denial of His own nature; therefore the consistence of these two apparently opposite things is possible to Him, and it is no more contrary to human reason to believe in God's omnipotence than it is to believe that He can and does reconcile them. All that has ever been written to impugn either the doctrine of decrees or of free agency, or to reconcile the two, would be much better at the bottom of the sea than where it is; for every line written to reconcile them adds another layer to the immense mountain of human folly, and is as

wise as attempting to scale heaven ! it is a great gulf fixed between the divine and human mind.

As the soul of man is intended to be a holy temple where divinity may dwell, and where a perpetual worship may be observed ; as the things of this life are unsatisfying and evanescent ; as the great dignity of man consists in receiving continued influxes of the divine nature, and of living as an immortal son of the Almighty God : so it is utterly at variance with this his position in the universe to be excited and carried away by any earthly good or evil. It is sufficient if he can walk in the light of God's countenance, feel in his heart that God is his Father, and orders all his ways ; that he is a brother of angels, and of all good spirits, nay of the Lord Jesus Christ Himself. Surely to be the son and heir of the Creator of all worlds and all intelligences, inferior and superior, is sufficient

wealth and sufficient power for any finite being, and must render him perfectly independent of the vain ambitions and vain strifes concerning any earthly objects whatever. As the mind becomes occupied by such vanities and strifes it becomes unfit for the communion of God, is blinded to holy and great thoughts, sells its eternal birthright for a mess of pottage, surrenders its glorious privileges to become a vassal to the Prince of this world, and inherits for ever the portion of an earthly fallen spirit. The fool saith in his heart that there is no God, or he saith that there is no God in his heart, and yet if he will examine that heart he will find that there is some God there. There is but one God, but men have made to themselves gods many and lords many. There can be but one God; essentially the hearts of all men are alike. From the hand of one Maker they have sprung; they own a common parent. God is the supreme

good, and there can be but one supreme good to creatures of one nature. If all things have a Maker, He must be the supreme good to His creatures; and yet how few make Him so; he who does not must practically be an Atheist. Men's idols are as numerous as the existences around us; they are those things on which men chiefly rely, and which they chiefly love. The idolatry of the worldly-minded man is greater than that of those heathen nations who make to themselves gods of wood and stone; the latter are intended to be symbolical of a higher being, but the former are worshipped and served in themselves, without any reference beyond. The worst idolatry of all is the worship of self, in other words selfishness, which is the great idolatry of the present time. With those who cling to some outward object, not directly selfish, however low or trifling the object, some sympathy cannot but be felt; they make one feel

loath to deprive them of their sustaining prop before a higher and better is supplied; they are objects rather of pity and commiseration; the selfish of detestation and abhorrence. "Flee covetousness, which is idolatry." "The love of money is the root of all evil."

THE END.

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